

I Love Being a Woman

Sabine Lichtenfels, transcription of a free speech, 2000



I am trying to formulate something I have found in many women – in their desires, fears and needs, and in their deeper longings. Yet, what I will say is not necessarily true for all women. I am trying to draw the image of a feminine archetype, which could be instrumental in initiating a process of social healing worldwide.

I am a woman. I am thankful for that, for I like being a woman.

If spoken in full truth, making such a statement already requires a fundamental shift in women's worldview, reconnecting us with our true and most beautiful sources. It requires me to liberate myself from the societal straitjacket which for thousands of years has forced images on me that do not correspond to my true universal source of life.

The historic disruption that disconnected me from my feminine source of knowledge is reflected in the religious story of the Fall. Since then, all women as descendants of Eve, the entire female gender, they say, has sinned with her. Tertullian, an early Church Father, had the following to say about the female sex:

"... thus your guilt must continue to live. You allowed the evil to enter... Firstly, you dismissed the divine law, and secondly, you beguiled the one whom not even the

devil could seduce. This is how easily you brought down man, the image of God. Because of your guilt, i.e. for the sake of death, the Son of God also had to die."

It was forgotten that there were much older myths of Creation relating to Eve. Eve originally meant "mother of all living beings." Many ancient peoples saw the goddess and the serpent as grandparents. Religious images show Eve as she gives life to man, while the serpent is coiled around the apple tree, symbolizing the tree of life. Humanity was driven out of Paradise through an historic cultural shift and, according to the Kabbalah, paradise on Earth can only be restored through reunifying the two sexes. Even God himself had to be reunited with his female counterpart, called "Sheshina," the divine Eve. Reconnecting with the original female sources seems to be an essential step on this path. I call what needs to happen historically the "culture of partnership." This free thought carries within it an image of partnership that is no longer dependent on any conditions but that occurs naturally between two freely loving people, and which can include many other men and women on its journey of love. This kind of faithfulness arises from a free and empathizing perception and understanding of the world.

My Biological Longing for Community

In early history the hearth was the social hub and sacred place of a community. The women were at the center, not only for one man and their children, but for the entire tribe. Within me, there is an archaic, original and elementary longing that calls out for community. It calls out for ways of life that are again embedded in a larger context. In my cells I seem to carry an original memory, reminding me of an ancient form of matriarchal coexistence. (...) I want to live in a community of men and women, with children, animals and plants, in such a way that I do not have to hide my true nature from the others. Perception and contact are sources of life as elementary as breathing. If these are given, then I love being a woman, for then I can fully be a woman. My fulfillment as a woman has always occurred in the community. This basic biological longing still lives in my cells today. Under the current societal conditions, I am forced to squeeze this longing for contact, permanence and faithfulness into much too narrow forms. We need a larger community of trust to unfold Eros and love in a way that corresponds to my true femininity. A humane peace culture depends on whether or not we are able to build functioning communities. It is strange that people can even live without community. In our Western patriarchal culture everyone has been torn away from their natural, universal, tribal basis. Nowadays, communities mostly fail because of the love issue, due to the unsolved problems of competition and jealousy.

I Am a Sexual Being

In primordial cultures we were all connected to Mother Earth. We were in her service. Love is what we called this connection with life. We all were one large

interconnected family, and all love relationships were embedded within the greater whole. There were no private love relationships.

Here, I am approaching an essential aspect of my female existence that is mostly suppressed and denied: sexuality. I am a woman. Since I am a woman, I am a sexual being. And I like being a sexual being. Still today, in the 21st century, this statement, spoken by a woman, requires revolutionary courage. It is a type of courage that only few women have, although we are supposedly living in an era of sexual liberation. It requires us to leave shame and the fear of violence, suppression and punishment behind. It requires us to leave false morals, the fear of the envy of competitors and normative beauty images behind. It requires us to leave the religious concepts of our patriarchal culture, the old concept of love and helplessness toward men behind. And it requires us to leave sexual comparison and the stress of performance behind. There is hardly anything that she does not have to leave behind to be able to make this statement freely and without secretly having some bad conscience.

A fundamental fear of sexuality was historically imprinted into our female cells ever since patriarchy was established. Our level of fear rises immediately if our sexual affirmation is no longer only directed toward one single man. Images of violence, of annihilation and destruction of women, historic images of sexual atrocities, which are stored as sedimented fear in the cells of women, are awakened whenever we approach the topic of sexuality. Yet, the cruelty and fear bound to sexuality are not part of sexuality itself – they result from millennia of sexual suppression and misuse. (...)

My Idea of Partnership

As a free woman, I long for partnership with a man in which I neither subjugate myself, nor turn away from him, nor place myself above and mother him. Being a heterosexual woman, I say: I need men. Yet I neither need the man as a ruler nor as a henpecked husband nor in his old role as teacher and instructor. I want him as a truly potent, sensual lover, as someone who knows sensual love. (...) I will no longer bind him to me with tricks, because I have experienced that blackmailing destroys the very thing we originally love about each other. I will see to it that free and passionate encounters with men become possible in the way that I have wanted them for millennia. Eros is naturally free, it cannot be confined to flow in artificial channels. The enlightenment that I seek does not occur in the beyond but in my cells, in an earthy and elementary way. It is of a sexual nature, out and out. Here, I am referring to ancient feminine mystery knowledge which we slowly begin to remember and which can guide us toward a fundamental cultural shift. Yet, this shift can only occur if we regard sexuality as a sacred source of insight and universal love. (...)

I will support men by showing them what I love and desire about them and what I do not. If I truly surrender to a man, including sexually, I will not become dependent, but free. Only when I deny this kind of surrender will I enter into constricted and exclusive relationships and personally demand love from a man. Yet, Eros calls us to open ourselves and participate in the sensual reality beyond all restriction of marriage. Eros itself has an anarchistic power that goes beyond all laws. Recognizing the erotic reality gives rise to a deeper love and continuity between two people – and this connection cannot be based on prohibitions and limitations. By revealing myself more and more fully to the other, I can walk a path of insight that leads to deeper levels of faithfulness than was ever possible in a kind of marriage based on excluding others.

Original Sexual Knowledge

Ancient matriarchal cultures regarded sexuality as an aspect of our intimate connection to nature and to the goddess. In sexual fertility rituals, we celebrated Eros itself. These were cosmic celebrations and, at the same time, an expression of gratitude to Mother Earth. In such rituals, we women could show and reveal our sensual desire publicly, and not only in front of a single, private man. Both we women and men offered our Eros to each other as a way to serve and say thank you to Mother Earth. A woman who tried to bind a man to herself personally had failed in her service in the temple of love.

This type of elementary, simple and powerful sexual encounter was banned in our culture. Love and sexuality were separated from each other. Historically, this gave rise to the romantic troubadour on one hand, who admired and worshipped love and sexuality and thus declared them sacrosanct. On the other hand, this led to the sexual offender who followed the elementary force of forbidden lust. Banning both the sacred and the passionate aspects of sexuality led to sadism and masochism, resulting in unspeakable violence, as we have seen throughout patriarchal history.

To come to the fulfillment we desire, we need to integrate the sacred aspect of sexuality. We need natural forms of community in which this truth can be lived. (...) My feminine religious longing needs neither churches nor altars. Patriarchal religions have established themselves by suppressing our erotic and sexual reality. It was a tool of power against the erotic authority of feminine cultures. Eve and the serpent symbolized this patriarchal ban on sexuality, driving us out of Paradise and condemning us women as evil. However, there is a sacred component of life itself which cannot be driven out and which has remained intact throughout millennia of destruction and suppression.

In the beginning of the 19th century a nun wrote:

“It's enough to raise your spirit to God, and then no act is a sin, no matter what it may be (...) the love of God and the love of your neighbor are the highest commandments. A man who unites with God by the help of a woman is following both commands. The same is true of someone who raises his spirit to God and takes pleasure in the same sex or alone (...) Carrying out these acts, which mistakenly are described as being sinful, is the true purity that has been ordained by God, and without which no human being can gain knowledge from him.”

This is an expression of how ancient matriarchal knowledge could survive over centuries in spite of all alienation and persecution through the church and the Inquisition. This kind of elementary sexual knowledge is currently re-emerging vehemently.

As a woman, I will develop myself culturally and historically to become a powerful organ caring for Mother Earth. I will help raise consciousness about this issue in many women. The Earth is as physical as we are. It is a matter of reawakening a cellular knowledge in our bodies. We can access it through the right kind of wakefulness, perception and presence for each other and by becoming sensually present for this Earth. This consciousness will also give rise to an entirely new concept of ecology.

Finding Elementary Trust Again

Here, we find the elementary trust that we lost a long time ago. It is trust in the elementary forces of nature itself. Based on this trust, it is possible to connect with these vital forces in a way that they give us their protection. Connecting with these forces provides us with a great opportunity for fulfillment. It requires that I place myself fully in the service of the Earth and all its creatures. I must do this in spite of the great destruction currently happening on this planet.

In this sense, I can willingly subscribe to the biblical statement: “Follow me, for I am with you all days, until the end of the world.” In this case I am not following a guru, but I am fully surrendering to the loving aspects of the Earth, the Goddess. Imagine the sensual trust that enters into our cells when we follow the statement in such a way that no fear can creep in, because we can perceive the protective powers of growth in nature and connect with them both physically and spiritually. (...)

If we can walk this path, we arrive at the basic cellular knowledge of our female cells. They carry the information that is needed for our fulfillment. It is like the memory of an archaic dream, of a prehistoric state, in which a culture of peace has already been lived.

Based on this new perspective, I will develop a new relationship with myself as a woman, an historical being. I am being guided no longer by leaders and patriarchal laws, but by the universal powers inherent in the Earth and matter's original dream of paradise. In this sense, my freedom and my necessity lead me to be of service for Mother Earth.

This is an edited excerpt from [Temple of Love](#) by [Sabine Lichtenfels](#)